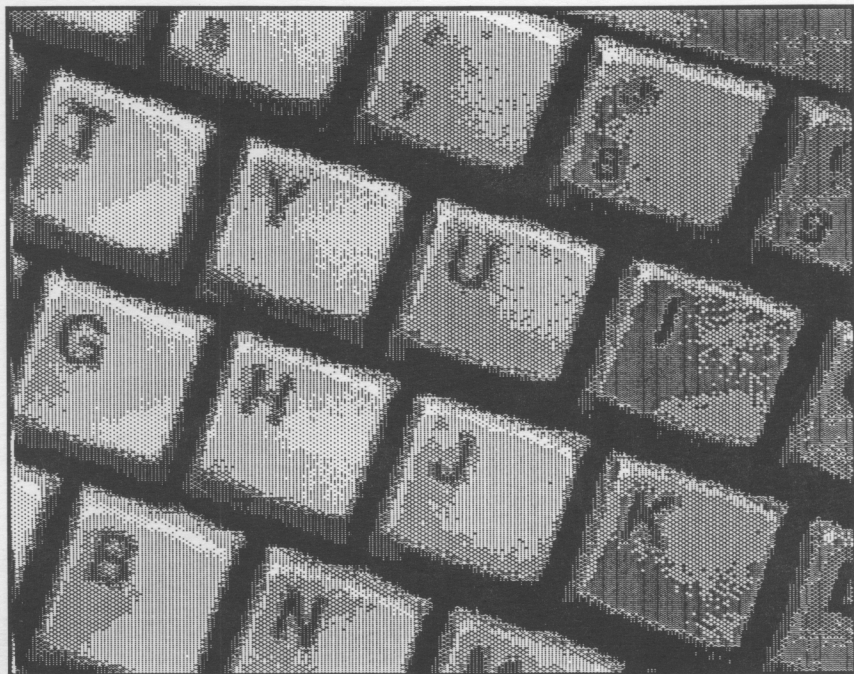


Club Information



ABE's ACEs

**Allentown Bethlehem Easton's
Atari Computer Enthusiasts**

P.O. Box 2830
LEHIGH VALLEY, PA 18001

WELCOME TO YOUR CLUB

Allentown Bethlehem Easton's Atari Computer Enthusiasts (ABE's ACES) is an independent, informal organization of Atari computer owners. While our club is recognized by Atari Corporation, it is not affiliated with Atari or any other commercial enterprise.

What are user groups all about? The April/May 1985 issue of Atari Explorer had one of the best one-sentence answers. "User groups provide a forum to share ideas, to get advice, and to learn how to get the most out of your Atari computer."

This guide was written to introduce new club members to the many functions and services of our club. It's our hope that this information will make it easier for members to utilize the club.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The club is governed by a seven member board known as the executive committee. Each member of the board has an area of responsibility. The president presides over the monthly meetings and oversees board functions. The vice-president arranges for the presentations at the monthly meetings and assumes the president's duties if needed. The treasurer handles all finances for the club. The Recording Secretary keeps minutes of all board meetings. The Membership Secretary tracks all membership information. The Librarian is responsible for the club's disk, tape and book materials. The Newsletter Editor is responsible for the publication of the club's internal newsletter.

These seven board members determine the direction of the club. All decisions are made by a majority vote. Executive committee members are elected from the general club membership each June to serve a one year term. Any club member, eighteen years of age or older, may run for the executive committee. Nominations are made at the April and May meetings. If you're interested in more information about the inner-workings of the club, ask the librarian for a copy of the club's constitution. Several copies are available for loan from the library.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly meetings are held the second Saturday of each month. We understand that some members cannot attend meetings on a Saturday afternoon and that others would prefer if the meetings were held at some other day or time. The Saturday afternoon meeting has proven to be the best time for the largest number of our members and until such time as the majority of our members request another date, the Saturday meetings will continue.

Doors open at 1PM. It is requested that you do not arrive at the meeting hall before 1. From 1 until 2PM you may use the club library, visit the vendors who sometimes rent space from the club, or just visit with fellow Atari computer owners. By all means, do mingle. It's easy for a club to appear to be a group of "clicks" where new members feel like outsiders. Don't let this discourage you. Almost everyone at our meetings first met at a club meeting. We all share a common interest in Atari computers and our club is not full of

"computer experts." The full range of user levels are represented from new owner to experienced programmer. The vast majority of our users fall into the large area in between, average Atari computer owners. This is also a good time to take a look at the bulletin board we set up at each meeting. This is where we post messages about new additions to our club library, area events and other club news. Members are also permitted to post notices on this board. (No commercial vendor ads please.)

At about 2PM the general meeting is called to order. The board members update the membership on all club matters such as finance, membership, etc.

The next section of the general meeting is known as the I/O or Input/Output section. For those of us not versed in "computerese" this is the question and answer section. If you have any Atari-related questions, feel free to ask them. Nothing is too trivial or complex to be asked.

This is also the time for announcements. If you have a piece of equipment for sale, heard of a new software store, or whatever, please share the information.

The next section of the meeting is for presentations or demos. From time to time we have outside speakers on a variety of subjects but most of our presenters are fellow club members. You don't have to be an expert to give a short demonstration. If you buy a program, why not let the rest of the club see what it's like. The Vice President schedules all of our presentations and he or she will be asking for volunteers almost every month. If you're a new

meetings and see what other people are showing then, when you're ready, contact the VP about a game or utility you'd be willing to show. Most of these demos last 5-10 minutes and consist of simply showing the main features of the program. In addition, the club owns a VHS video tape recorder so, if you prefer, you can tape your presentation in advance. For many programs, this helps tighten the presentation. Ask an E-Board member for more information about video presentations.

The formal meeting is normally over around 3PM. Don't rush off. After the meeting members have a chance to ask questions of the executive committee members or the members who gave demos. It's also another chance to talk with other members or browse at a vendors table.

MEETING RULES

We have very few rules dealing with the monthly meetings but a few, based on common courtesy, are enforced.

1) There will be NO BUYING OR SELLING during the general meeting. Please visit the vendor tables before 2PM or after the general meeting.

2) Please don't hold private conversations during the meeting. It makes it difficult for other members who want to hear what's going on at the meeting and is inconsiderate of the feelings of those people who are giving demos.

3) Don't litter in the meeting hall. Smoking is permitted in the lobby but not in the theater. The club and its members

have a responsibility to leave the meeting room in the same condition it was in at the start of the meeting.

4) All demos must be of original programs, not copies or filename versions.

5) Commercial vendors may rent space at the monthly meetings. If you're interested, check with a board member about fees. We also offer a special package if the vendor has an advertisement in the current issue of the club newsletter. Because space at the monthly meetings is limited, the executive committee reserves the right to limit the number of vendor tables.

LIBRARY

ABE's ACES maintains an extensive library. All selections in the library are available to the general membership. The club attempts to obtain a wide variety with something of interest for everyone.

The library is open from 1 until 2PM. It is closed once the meeting is called to order. The library is open again for approximately one-half hour at the conclusion of the formal presentations and demos.

THE DISK LIBRARY

Copies of library disks are available at the monthly meetings. The cost of a club disk covers the HIGH QUALITY disk plus wear and tear on the club's drives.

No copies will be made at the meetings. Every attempt will be made to have enough copies on hand of all disk selections.

If for some reason we should run out of a particular disk, you may fill out a disk order form. Give the order form and payment (no additional charge for shipping) to the librarian or assistant. You will receive a receipt which you should hold on to until you receive your disk, normally within ten (10) days after the meeting.

We are attempting to use a standardized menu program throughout the library (exceptions will be made for special edition disks). The menu has a scrolling listing and can display all the files on a crowded disk. The menu can be used with either the keyboard or a joystick. Pressing the UP and DOWN arrow or pushing the joystick forward and back will move the cursor up and down on the listing. Pressing the RETURN key or the joystick fire button will select the file. Pressing the START key will load and run the file.

A catalog of all programs in the library is available for a nominal fee. This catalog lists all programs by disk number. Wherever necessary, a short description of the program is included. We try to keep filenames as descriptive as possible. To help with this, and to help you in choosing programs from the library, we make use of filename extensions.

THE PAPER LIBRARY

The club also maintains a large collection of printed materials. This collection includes some of the best user guides available for the Atari computer. Also on hand are periodicals, newsletters from other Atari clubs as well as our own, and a selection of printed product

information.

We have a cross-index of 90% of the Atari related items found in ANTIC, ANALOG and COMPUTE! Several copies of this index are kept at the library table at each meeting. Members can use the index to locate program instructions, reviews and so on. The index was created on SynFile+ and the data is available on a library disk for those members who own SynFile. With this disk, members can index the material in any way they wish.

Most of the printed material is available on a "take out" basis. The club reserves the right to label some items as "research only". This material, being difficult or impossible to replace, will be available for inspection only at club meetings.

The club's policy for lending out printed materials is simple enough. Pieces are loaned out on a per item basis for the period of time between club meetings. In the past, some library property either never came back or was returned several months late. In light of this we have instituted a policy of keeping a deposit for materials out on loan. It currently stands at \$5.00 for a book and \$1.00 for a periodical. Please note that we are not in the business of selling books and magazines - the deposit(s) are refunded upon return of the document(s).

LIBRARY DONATIONS

If you have rewritten, modified or improved any existing programs or have written any programs for your own use we encourage you to donate them to the library. Feel free to splash your name across the title screen. After all, you

wrote (or rewrote) it yourself! Don't be suprised if we add an "ABE's ACES PRESENTS..." - even a club needs recognition.

If you have any donations to make, bring a copy and see the librarian before or after the meeting. Your disk will be replaced with a new high quality blank disk. If you can include any instructions or information about the program it would be a big help. It can be in the form of a typed sheet or a help file on the disk. The library is one of the most time consuming jobs in the club and anything members can do to ease the burden is greatly appreciated.

BEYOND THE MEETINGS

Our club is more than a group of people who meet once a month. In fact, a number of people have joined the club knowing full-well that they were unable to attend the general meetings. They are able to share in the club thru one or more of the club's additional functions beyond the monthly meetings.

NEWSLETTER

One of these functions is the club's newsletter which is published six times a year. It keeps members informed of all club activities, the latest Atari news, programming tips and much more. As with all club functions, the newsletter depends on the support of its members. Please contribute to it. A software review, program idea, news item, even a high score from your favorite Atari game is welcome.

The newsletter editor would like your submissions on disk in Atariwriter,

Atariwriter Plus, Paper Clip or ASCII format. Your disk will be returned.

Bring your submission to the next club meeting or send it directly to the newsletter editor whose name and address are published in each issue. (Ask the editor for a disk mailer.) You can also upload your submission to the club's BBS. If you have any questions about the newsletter or submissions, please contact the editor.

Special Interest Groups

Special Interest Groups or SIGs are a growing part of our club. When a club gets as large as ours, it becomes increasingly difficult to satisfy all of the members diverse interests. Any club member can join a SIG. A list of the club's current, active SIGs can be found in this information packet. If you see a topic for which you have a special interest, contact the SIG leader whose name is also on this list. If you have an interest for which the club has no SIG, why not start one? The executive committee will be happy to help you. Contact the club president for more information on what's involved in starting your own SIG. Basically, these groups meet on a day other than that of the general club meeting. They get support in the form of both money and equipment, from the club. In return they report to the club via its newsletter or at the general meetings. From time to time each SIG is expected to make a presentation to the general membership.

The major advantages of SIGs are the fact that they specialize in topics that interest those attending. They meet on

days other than those of the main club thus members who cannot make the general meeting can often attend SIGs. The smaller numbers of members attending each SIG meeting allow for a much more personal exchange between members. It's often possible to get one-on-one help at a SIG meeting.

BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM

The club has its own electronic bulletin board system or BBS called THE HELP KEY II. This is a computer system which you can call over normal phone lines. If you have a modem as part of your Atari system, your computer can link up with the club's system. You can then get the latest club info, read and post messages, download programs and much more.

Complete information on our club's BBS and how to use it is included in your club information folder. This information was written by the SYStem OPERator or SYSOP. If you have any questions about the BBS, contact the SYSOP via the club's hotline.

HOTLINE

Even if you don't own a modem, you can keep up-to-date on club activities via our 24-hour HOTLINE.

The HOTLINE number is published in our newsletter. Call it anytime, day or night, for the latest news about our next meeting. If you're in doubt about a meeting being held (snow storm?) the HOTLINE will have the answer.

The HOTLINE is also set up to record your message if you wish to leave one. If you have a question or suggestion for the

club, you can leave it on the HOTLINE. Remember, this is a voice (phone answering machine) line and no computer equipment is needed to access it.

IN CONCLUSION...

That covers all of the major areas of the club. If after reading this pamphlet you have any questions about any aspect of the club, feel free to contact any member of the executive committee or bring it up at the next general meeting.

As stated earlier, this is your club. It's made up of a diverse group of individuals with at least one common interest, Atari computers. It's up to all of us to make the club work. Get involved. We're always ready to listen to new ideas and suggestions. Contribute what you can...demos, newsletter material, SIGs, whatever. Most of us have found that the more we give, the more we receive. Above all, have fun. This club is dedicated to helping you get the most enjoyment out of your Atari computer investment.

One last point. Please keep in mind that this is a USER GROUP, not a company. The members of the E-Board are volunteers doing what they can to help other Atari computer users. We do not receive payment for our work. If you feel that an area or function of the club could be improved, by all means speak up BUT, be prepared to help implement your ideas. A handful of people can only do so much. A large group of people, working together, can accomplish a lot.

Sincerely,
The Executive Committee
July 1987

